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**Utah Prevention Strategy - 2012**

Utah is experiencing historic fuel moisture conditions. All of the fire danger index measurements are pointing to a situation potential of catastrophic fires in the state. The US Forest Service, on behalf of the federal and state interagency fire services, requested a National Wildland Fire Prevention and Education Team to be in place from June 18 through July 2, 2012. The Team’s primary mission is to support the agencies in their wildfire prevention messages.

The goal of the Team is to develop a unified message for the Utah fire agencies and systematically deliver the message throughout the state to address the current wildfire concerns due to extremely dry vegetation and very high fire danger.

**The Delegation of Authority was signed on Jun 18, 2012 with the following guidelines for the Team.**

**Objective 1:** Develop a region-wide Communication Strategy with statewide messages to help the public become aware of the severe drought conditions and high fire potential in Utah.

**Strategy:**

* Research historic, current and expected drought condition information and prepare visual depictions of the material.
* Research historic and current fire occurrence – perform a fire-cause analysis and visually map the results for demonstration and displays at meetings.
* Develop messaging needs for each of the 5 regions of the state.
* Develop a three-pronged approach to disseminate the prevention messages using media, agencies, and community engagement.

**Actions:**

* Predictive Services, Shelby Law, developed four highly useful drought products (ERC, Percent of Average Precipitation, Drought Severity Index, and Potential Fire Hazard). The Team enhanced each of these files from .jpg images to large-map printable versions. Steve Winward supported the effort by getting them printed quickly as needed.
* Tyre collected agency fire occurrence and cause data for the Team. The data was formatted to provide a spreadsheet of valuable information from which GIS maps can be developed to depict location patterns and causal patterns for the last 10 years. The mapping will be valuable to the Communications Committee.
* The Team held a conference call with the Communications Committee to listen for specific issues and concerns from across the state. There were comments from all regions and two primary needs were identifies; restrictions messaging and messaging in dispersed camping areas.
* The Prevention Implementation Strategy is developed and presented as a product of this final report. The strategy was used to deliver the products of the information campaign.

**Objective 2:** Create PSAs with statewide known celebrities whose name will be provided throughout the assignment.

**Strategy:**

* Develop text and obtain approval to place PSAs on radio stations.
* Be receptive to suggestions and celebrities furnished by the host.
* Develop a PSA for Governor Gary Herbert with fire danger message.
* Explore using the voice of Maverick personality.

**Actions:**

* A PSA was developed for Governor Herbert. The recorded message was made available for public dissemination on June 27.
* Charity Parks recorded two additional prepared PSAs for distribution to the media, released on June 28.
* Sent Ad Council Smokey PSA to radio stations on 7/1
* No other PSAs were requested or produced.

**Objective 3:** Develop a statewide media campaign making contacts with local media markets such as KSL, KUTV, FOX news, KTVX and other local media stations to run stories about the drought and the high potential for fires.

**Strategy:**

* Develop distribution list of key media.
* Discuss prevention issues with field prevention personnel to explore feature and special interest stories, and immediate informational needs, then prioritize.
* Focus messaging on human-caused fires.
* Develop targeted messages and products on target practice and shooting fire cause.
* Develop targeted messages and products on fireworks and pyrotechnics.
* Disseminate fire restriction messaging in a timely fashion.
* Prepare explanation of Stage II restriction possibility and meaning.

**Actions:**

* The media list for the assignment was compiled from agency sources and prepared for distribution of materials.
* Agency direction allowed the Team to focus on the 90% occurrence of fires caused by people (human-caused ignitions).
* Targeted messaging was developed to address the combination of fire causes; to include shooting activities, campfires, fireworks, and equipment use.
* Team members accompanied prevention technicians and a law enforcement officer in the field to see first hand the types of messaging issues and problems faced by field personnel. Many of the prevention signage products are a result of these visits, comments from across the state, and agency direction.
* The central theme of the campaign is “Utah, Let’s Do Our Part”. The banner and theme were used on several products with the inclusion of the UtahFireInfo.gov website on all products. The main banner is to be on the fixed billboards from 6/30 for 2 months.
* The fire causes of shooting and fireworks were woven into the messaging of restriction products. There were also products produced specifically to address how fires can be prevented from each cause.
* The simplification of the restrictions was done using symbols and text in a one-page product, distributed to many networks for their use. The product had ‘do and don’t’ symbols for stage I.
* A draft flyer was also produced for stage II restrictions if needed later in the summer.
* Delivery of 100 aluminum ‘Fires Banned Due to Wildfire Danger’ signs were produced and delivered 6/28 for use by all agencies. The plastic signage is due for delivery on 7/2.
* We believe all products will be delivered by the time the Team leaves with the exception of hunting/fishing license holders for DWR that should be within one week.

**Objective 4:** Utilize the UtahFireInfo.gov website to develop a dynamic banner that all partners can place on their websites and share with other publics to be placed on their websites.

**Strategy:**

* Contact webmaster to discuss inclusion of banner from team.
* Use the developed message theme for the banner and general theme image.
* Discuss the opportunities to include one-link access to special map files, documents, and other relevant prevention information.
* Provide input into how prevention messages can be enhanced through website use, specifically a ‘one-stop-shop’ for Utah prevention.
* Discuss linkage from website to specific agency restrictions.

**Actions:**

* Contact made with Chad Douglas for product, theme, videos, and interactive restrictions map
* Team provided 4-message revolving signage used on front page of website
* The UtahFireInfo.gov site is on all produced products to direct individuals for more information
* On the plastic signage, a digital image application was added so a swipe with a cell phone takes the user directly to the website
* Theme banner and related products were requested to be ,sent out through each agency, asking for further distribution through every user group network they could utilize

**Objective 5:** Work with billboard companies to fill empty space boards with advertisements either designed by the Team, resources assigned to the team from the agencies or from existing AD Council Smokey Bear material.

**Strategy:**

* Research potential billboard vendors and space availability.
* Develop billboard graphic using central message theme.
* Place billboard materials in most strategic locations maximizing value.

**Actions:**

* Reagan Sign Company was chosen as the billboard vendor. Two other companies were given opportunity to bid.
* Graphic design of the selected theme and products were developed and sent to the company for inclusion.
* Three digital signs were rented for a one-month period on major interstate accesses in the SLC area. Four rotating messages were viewed on fireworks, shooting safety, chain sparks, and drowning the campfire.
* Three fixed billboards were rented beginning 6/30 for one-month and the intent of renting for a second month with a fourth board added on Hwy 6. These signs have the theme banner.

**Objective 6:** Coordinate Team efforts with fire prevention employees from all agencies within the state.

**Strategy:**

* Develop listing of key prevention contacts throughout the state.
* Hold conference call with key contacts to discuss prevention needs and opportunities for Team assistance.
* Meet with field personnel as requested to discuss specific concerns or projects.
* Ensure that central theme and information reaches all prevention resources.

**Actions:**

* The Team worked on a comprehensive list of prevention resources of the state. Due to change in assignments the project fell short of completion, yet is close and can be completed by Utah state forestry this summer.
* One conference call with about 20 prevention personnel was held early in the assignment. Specific concerns and project suggestions were made. This gave us a good sampling of the needs of the state in all regions.
* Campfires in dispersed recreation areas and restriction signage were the two largest problems for the field.
* The Team monitored various websites of agencies and user groups to see if the networking of prevention information got out and was being used.

**Objective 7:** Provide advice and counsel to all State and Federal agencies.

**Strategy:**

* Assess current situation, make observations, be available, and discuss Team’s areas of concern.
* Provide documentation of conversations and potential projects, lessons-learned, and recommendations.

**Actions:**

* The Team discussed a wide variety of topics with agencies and individuals to get a feel for the issues impacting the field. Responses led to the development of an overall strategy of prevention material needs.
* The Team provided guidance and suggestions on signage ideas and graphic representation of their desired messages.

**Objective 8:** Develop fliers and other materials, if time permits, for the various federal and state agencies.

**Strategy:**

* Develop strategy for product and imaging needs.
* Explore needs for support of graphics designer.
* Produce products short and long-term, staying within the central theme.

**Actions:**

* The Team suggested and got approval to include a graphic artist to develop products for the assignment. The value of immediate review, edit, and approval of ideas and products produced was extremely valuable.
* The products produced are in the appendix of this document and captured electronically on external hard drives.

**Objective 9:** Provide Team administrative documentation of budget, personnel, and Team activities.

**Strategy:**

* Maintain all budget information for the assignment and keep host agency informed of funding percentage expenditures.
* Provide Final Report documentation for historic record and description of process, contacts, and accomplishments.

**Actions:**

* The budget information was tracked throughout the assignment giving the host access to percent of expenditures.
* Documentation is presented in the final package along with the final report of the Team.
* Training and task books were part of the assignment. One team leader and PIO2 trainee and one team member moved closer to task book completion.

**While accomplishing these objectives the Team will:**

* Adhere to safety procedures established for the Team.
* Adhere to applicable local, state, and federal laws.
* Provide for a harassment free work environment.

**Prevention Implementation Strategy**

The initial strategy to develop and implement the prevention message for Utah consists of central message theme development and network distribution. A central theme must be inclusive of all agency prevention message intent and be applicable in a broad array of venues for display and use.

Distribution of the central message theme is intended to extend to as many network recipients as possible. Each recipient receives a similar message (the central theme) in the language of the network user group.

**Developing the Central Message**

The Team develops the central message in consultation with agency representatives. Graphic design presents the message in as few words as possible, yet communicating the theme. The Team utilizes existing prevention messages that have been successful in the past, or refreshed messages the agencies feel are effective. The meaning of the message is further defined by listing actions the puiblic can do.

**Distribution of the Prevention Message**

The Team recommends the message be distributed in three primary methods.

Media: Media distribution reaches a very broad audience of viewers in print, television, radio, and social media distributions. An advantage of media is that messages can be widely varied in content and recipients hear the message in different formats.

Agency Distribution: Each agency has unique sets of clientele and user groups. Each user group interprets a message in slightly different terms. Additionally, each user group may interpret the message differently. Recipients are, often members of more than one group. The result is the recipient hearing the same theme in a variety of ways and with different interpretations.

Agencies are asked to:

* Use the central theme on their websites and communications with the public.
* Promote the theme and use it to expand the prevention message.
* Identify user groups and key networks.
* Refine the central message to the language of the user group.
* Request the message be sent out through the user group networks.
* Request a copy of user group message and volume of distribution.

Community Engagement: Areas of the state with unique or special prevention challenges are handled through engaging the community. It is recognized that community issues are more mitigation oriented than fire-cause driven. Prevention professionals identify communities that have a desire to take responsibility and work to assess and plan a strategy of action.

Community Assistance:

* Identify areas of concern within the state
* Assess the opportunities and prioritize
* Provide assistance through meetings, making information available, and facilitating community action

**Summary of Implementation Strategy**

Agencies are diverse in regard to their mission, user-groups, and interaction with the public. Restrictions, regulations, laws, ordinances, and closures are also specific to the agency and public function. The implementation of the central message is designed to be universal for all agencies and groups. The simple message is: Let’s do our part and prevent wildfire from human-caused ignitions.

This level of implementation is intended to reach broad audiences in different ways over an extended period of time. Specific fire cause information will be developed to supplement the needs of the state and particular situations and target groups.